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3 (Amended). A semiconductor laser device according to claim 2, wherein a bottom of said current confinement structure is at a height smaller than 0.25 micrometers above an upper surface of said quantum well layer.

4 (Amended). A semiconductor laser device according to claim 3, wherein said bottom of said current confinement structure is arranged on an upper surface of said upper optical waveguide layer.

5 (Amended). A semiconductor laser device according to claim 2, wherein said lower optical waveguide layer, said quantum well layer, and said upper optical waveguide layer are made of an aluminum-free semiconductor material.

6 (Amended). A semiconductor laser device according to claim 5, wherein said lower cladding layer is made of a semiconductor material containing aluminum.

7 (Amended). A semiconductor laser device according to claim 2, wherein said index-guided structure is an internal stripe type or a ridge waveguide type.

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8 (Amended). A semiconductor laser device having an index-guided structure and oscillating in a fundamental mode, comprising:

a lower cladding layer;

a lower optical waveguide layer formed above said lower cladding layer;

a quantum well layer formed above said lower optical waveguide layer;

an upper optical waveguide layer formed above said quantum well layer; and

a current confinement structure formed above said upper optical waveguide layer;

said upper optical waveguide layer has a first thickness smaller than a second thickness of said lower optical waveguide layer;

wherein said index-guided structure has a stripe width of 4 micrometers or smaller.

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**Kindly add the following new claims:**

9 (New). A semiconductor laser device having an index-guided structure and oscillating in a fundamental mode, comprising:

a lower cladding layer;

a lower optical waveguide layer formed above said lower cladding layer;

a quantum well layer formed above said lower optical waveguide layer;

an upper optical waveguide layer formed above said quantum well layer; and

a current confinement structure formed above said upper optical waveguide layer;

C1 wherein the current confinement layer is formed above said upper optical waveguide layer to be in physical contact with said upper optical waveguide layer.

10 (New). A semiconductor laser device according to claim 9, wherein a sum of said first and second thickness is 0.5 micrometers or greater.

11 (New). A semiconductor laser device according to claim 9, wherein said lower optical waveguide layer, said quantum well layer, and said upper optical waveguide layer are made of an aluminum-free semiconductor material.

12 (New). A semiconductor laser device according to claim 11, wherein said lower cladding layer is made of a semiconductor material containing aluminum.

13 (New). A semiconductor laser device according to claim 9, wherein said index-guided structure is an internal stripe type or a ridge waveguide type.

14 (New). A semiconductor laser device according to claim 9, wherein said index-guided structure has a stripe width of 4 micrometers or smaller.

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15 (New). The semiconductor laser device of claim 2, wherein the sum of the first and second thicknesses is 0.5 micrometers or greater but less than or equal to 0.9 micrometers.

16 (New). The semiconductor laser device of claim 2, wherein the sum of the first and second thicknesses is 0.5 micrometers or greater but less than or equal to .70 micrometers.